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696 554 term has not the stigma attached to it one might expect, however. For instance, Malakai of Tokalau was the village schoolmaster and had an acceptable standing in the community in spite of the fact that he had served a jail term for having stolen money while holding the position of *mbuli Kambara.*

691 626 Practically all court cases in Lau involving natives are handled by the district and provincial courts for natives only. Native district courts are held in preparation for the native provincial circuit court which sits on each island every two or three years. Most of the cases are either truancy or theft. There is a reluctance, however, on the part of the natives to submit cases to the government courts. Public opinion works two ways. It not only serves as a powerful force to prevent breaches of the social code, but it prevents many petty offenses from reaching the courtroom. In southern Lau there is a tendency to settle as many cases as possible out of court. This is possible only because of the strong sense of clan and communal loyalty. A man tries to protect his relatives, especially the members of his clan. This is illustrated by the following case.

691 673 602 One day Ketei, the industrious village headman of Tokalau, came to us with an earnest face. Twenty baskets of sweet potatoes had been taken without permission from his garden in the last three days. This represented the loss of about ten days' food supply for his family. Ketei said he would not have minded the loss, if the person who took them had only asked his permission. We asked if he knew who had taken them. He said he did not. He would not confide even his suspicions to us, but the gossip of the village was that Ramoko of Undu, Ketei's brother-in-law, had taken the sweet potatoes. Ramoko was known as the laziest man in Undu. At the slightest excuse, such as the new year's celebration (introduced in recent times), he moved with his wife and three children to live for two or three weeks with Ketei, his industrious brother-in-law, who always had plenty to eat as a result of hard and persistent

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labor. Ketei, however, made it a point of clan honor never to complain about a relative, and when the district court met the Ramoko case was not filed.

Theft cases frequently conflict with the native system of soliciting (called *kerekere*). According to this system, a man may solicit any movable property (which is not tabu) from his relative, who is obliged, in order not to lose face, to grant his request. The system weakens the link between a man and his personal or clan property, and shortens the step to theft.

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SOUTH SEA MAGIC.

We were running along the coast in smooth water beneath the high cliffs of Vanua Balavu, the northernmost island of the Lau Group—a group whose scattered islets dot the sun-kissed Pacific over a stretch of two hundred miles between the colony of Fiji and the island kingdom of Tonga. It was a sunny afternoon, and, reclining on a long chair on the deck of the little government yacht that carries the District Commissioner about on his multifarious duties, I was drowsily listening to the throbbing of the engines when I noticed one of the crew, a fuzzy-headed convict, gazing intently at a little bay between the cliffs. (The crew of the government yacht are always made up from the gaol, and this plan works excellently, as the Lauans are born sailors, and under the firm discipline of an experienced captain, and with a warder always on board with them, there is never any trouble to be feared. Indeed, most of them are gaol-birds of but mild hue, with wings temporarily clipped for comparatively trifling offences, petty larceny

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being one of the most common, as the Polynesian Lauan—true to type—is by nature more light-fingered than his semi-Papuan brother of Fiji.

I asked the man what he saw; and, seating himself cross-legged in the attitude of respect, he politely answered, "It is nothing, sir, I was but thinking of Filipi, a man formerly of my town."

"And what about Filipi? What did he do?" I inquired.

"He is dead," he answered, looking down at the deck.

Knowing from the man's attitude that there was something behind all this I asked him freely to tell me all. No one enjoys "spinning a yarn" more than a South Sea islander when he really gets started, and many interesting old legends, and, incidentally, helpful facts in my work, have I picked up in this way on some of my lengthy sea-journeys about the group.

"It was this way, sir," he began. "It was said that *dua na vakadraudrau ca* (some evil magic) was performed at that place there," pointing with his chin—the same gesture his Malayan ancestors had used thousands of years before—at the little bay we were passing. "I know nothing of it myself," he hastily added. "It is only what I have heard, and it happened years ago, just before you, sir, first came to Lau. Now, Filipi and a man of Nayau Island were doing

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THE DUEL 'TWEEN GOD AND GHOST.

I WAS riding along the white beaches of Cicia Island with my native magistrate, after a very trying day in the provincial courts, deciding such trifling points (though important to the natives) as alleged thefts of copra, petty assaults —with scores of contrary witnesses on each side— or cases of conjugal infidelity, and was already feeling refreshed and invigorated by a swift canter against the evening breeze. Reining up as we came to a patch of sea-worn pebbles and stones, with here and there a knob of filagree branching coral over which our horses stepped gingerly, my friend Wiliami turned to me and said:

"Just there, sir, by the roadside, you may perhaps see among the palm-trees an upright stone. That is the throne of Rata Maibula, the ancient god of Tarakua town, who was worsted in the great duel with the ghost of Ratu Koli."

Scenting a good legend, and knowing Wiliami of old as one who had the judicial mind, and an unbiassed view-point—despite his brown skin— I thought that here was an opportunity to get